

Student Needs Survey Summary Report

Fall Semester 2020

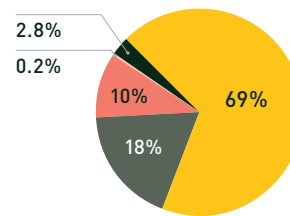


This survey was open to students at the University of Alberta from October 16th to November 11th, 2020. It was promoted through campus webpages, newsletters, social media channels and shared with campus partners and stakeholders.

The goal of the survey was to learn about University of Alberta students' needs and experiences during remote delivery for the Fall 2020 semester. The purpose of this report is to encourage a conversation about changes that can be made to better support students as they access services. While this report is based on a limited number of survey respondents (669 students), the diversity of experiences provide a starting point for understanding how we can enhance student services during remote delivery at the University of Alberta.

**TOTAL
RESPONDENTS:
669 Students**

| | | |
|---------------------------|------------|-------------|
| Undergraduate Students: | 464 | 69% |
| Master's Students: | 126 | 18% |
| PhD Students: | 70 | 10% |
| Post-doctoral Fellow: | 1 | 0.2% |
| University Staff members: | 19 | 2.8% |



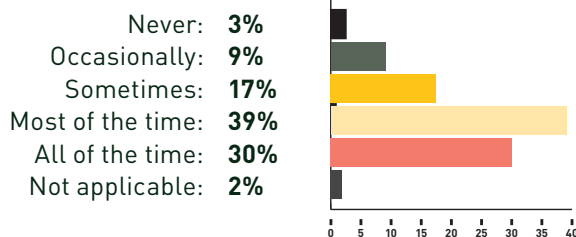
26% of respondents have been at the U of A for less than 1 year.

56% of respondents have been at the U of A for 1–4 years.

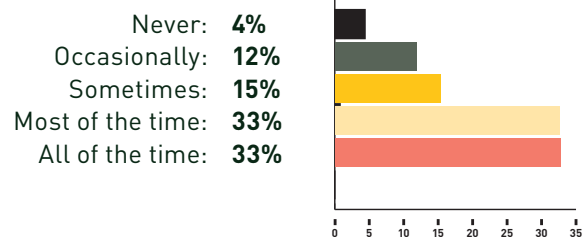
Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic Physical Campus Closures on Respondents:

Respondents were asked about their access to services during the physical campus closure:

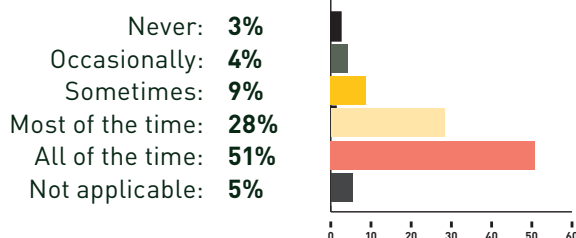
Access to a quiet space to complete course work:



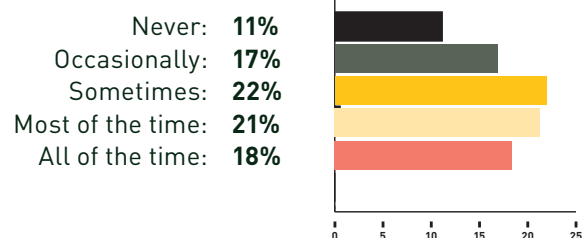
Access to a private space to access services:



Access to enough funds to pay for rent, mortgage, utilities, food, and other basic needs:

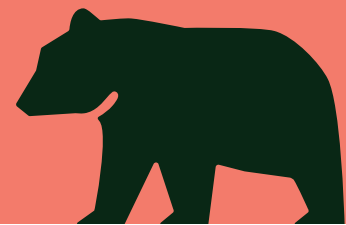


Access to mental health supports:



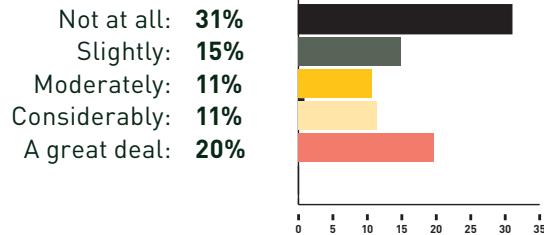
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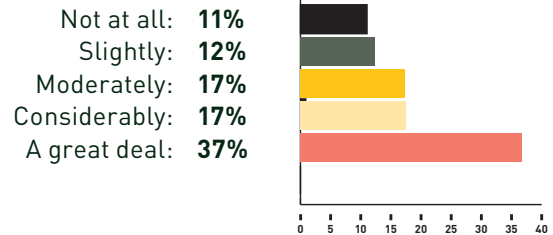


Respondents were asked how concerned they were about the following things related to the COVID-19 pandemic:

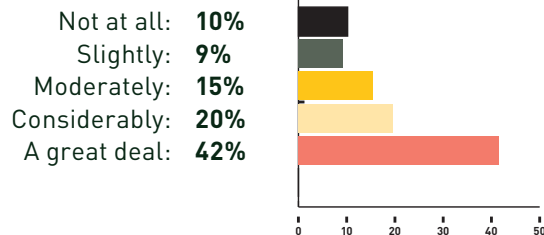
Concerned about taking on more student debt:



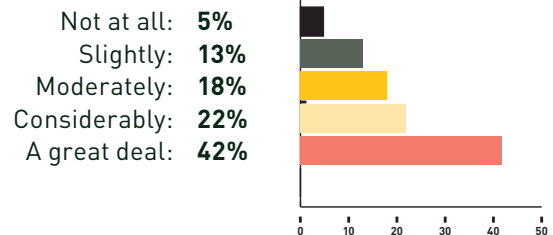
Concerned about receiving lower grades:



Concerned about having fewer job prospects:



Concerned about state of mental health:



Student Services:

WHEN:

9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. MT is the preferred time for respondents to access Student Services.

HOW:

Top 3 ways respondents prefer to engage with U of A Student Services:

1. In person
2. Video conference
3. Chat/handouts/recorded videos

WHERE:

Top 3 ways respondents find information about Student Services:

1. U of A website
2. Search Engine (Google)
3. Friends

“The video chat (google meet) call I had with an advisor was the most help I received all year in connecting with U of A, and it helped me a lot! The advisor was super friendly and informative and I didn’t feel rushed through the appointment at all, which I appreciate immensely!”

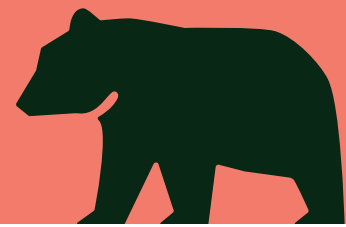
The following percentages of respondents were somewhat to very satisfied with Student Services:

| | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|
| Academic Success Centre | N = 70 of 100 (70%) |
| ACCESS Support Centre | N = 18 of 30 (60%) |
| Career Centre | N = 32 of 50 (64%) |
| Centre for Writers | N = 23 of 30 (77%) |
| Counselling Clinical Services | N = 27 of 46 (59%) |
| First People’s House | N = 6 of 8 (75%) |

| | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Multifaith Prayer & Meditation Space | N = 2 of 2 (100%) |
| Office of Student Ombuds | N = 4 of 7 (57%) |
| Residence Services | N = 17 of 26 (65%) |
| Sexual Assault Centre | N = 2 of 2 (100%) |
| University Health Centre | N = 78 of 89 (88%) |
| University Health Centre Pharmacy | N = 67 of 73 (92%) |

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Top Issues and Recommendations Raised by Respondents:

1. Mental Health

Respondents expressed an increased need for mental health supports due to added stress, anxiety and uncertainty related to their remote learning experiences. The top recommendations from respondents were as follows:

- Create an online booking system, not phone call, to book an appointment for mental health services.
- Provide more resources/counselling/workshops—they are always fully booked.
- Develop a chat option for mental health support.
- Raise more awareness of the mental health resources available.

“Making...services more easily accessible and flexible would be amazing. I have been waiting months to schedule an... appointment. I know everyone must be feeling overwhelmed and maybe a little helpless, and this seems like such a critical time to really be upping the availability of these resources.”

2. Learning Environment and Sense of Isolation

More than half of respondents (54%) did not feel connected to other students due to remote learning. Many respondents struggled to balance remote learning with their home environment due to internet connectivity issues, caregiving responsibilities and insufficient quiet spaces to study. The top recommendations from respondents were as follows:

- Publish information about workshops and learning sessions available to students.
- Promote student groups and clubs that are available.
- Encourage students to engage with their department or faculty student associations.
- Share information on ways to set up learning spaces at home.

“In some ways, I feel I have more access to services since many were not delivered remotely before. This is especially true of workshops.”

“I feel extremely disconnected, I haven't met anyone at school. It seems everyone is living in their own bubble and there are not any online events to bring people together that I am aware of.”

3. Communication about Services

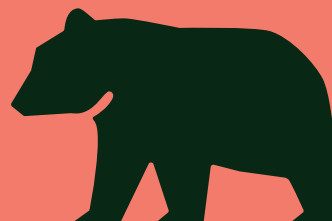
A majority of respondents (78%) reported a lack of awareness of Student Services available to them. The top recommendation from respondents was as follows:

- Continue to coordinate with partners to provide clear communications to students about the services available.

“Maybe communicate information more through social media/email blasts since it's a little hard to navigate the website sometimes.”

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Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity:

- Our student body is made up of a diverse group of individuals who require differing levels and kinds of support. Some respondents highlighted their experiences balancing studies with parenting, navigating accessibility, and encountering racism.
- We can begin to address these issues by examining our assumptions, policies, and procedures, making them more inclusive for students who may feel marginalized or excluded from programs or services.

“And I quote ‘you can either get an A or have accommodations, you can’t have both. You’re in grad school now so you don’t have any disabilities any more, right?’”

“I was told by an [advisor]... that one of the available [advisors] would discriminate against me, based on my race. They did their best to keep me away from that person (which I appreciate) but it meant it was harder to get counselling help.”

Respondent data pertains to Fall Semester 2020 only.

* Any information respondents shared about their experiences with our service partners was collated and communicated separately.



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